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Information is ammunition for your struggle. A fighter without ammunition is not a fighter. And for you, a fighter without information cannot speak.

Samora M. Machel, President of FRELIMO
to CFM delegation, Dar es Salaam, 8/71.

WESTERN STRATEGY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

We reprint here an edited version of an article by Sean Gervasi which appeared in the October, 1972 issue of Southern Africa. The article discusses important issues and we reproduce it because we feel it is essential for us, and groups and individuals with concerns similar to ours, to work at developing a correct understanding of the realities of imperialism and neo-colonialism against which we struggle.

The reprint is prompted by a meeting CFM had with Professor Gervasi last month at which many topics covered in this article were discussed. At that meeting Professor Gervasi spoke of the "four-pronged" western policy to preserve the status quo in Southern Africa: 1) obstructionism at the U.N. 2) Pressure of all kinds on free African states who support the liberation movements (such as Tanzania and Zambia) 3) Subversion of the liberation movements (for example, he mentioned an article in Le Monde Diplomatique, a French journal, citing attempts to "buy an Angolan Thiéu" in Paris) and 4) Aid to the white minority governments. Professor Gervasi also spoke of a fifth aspect of western strategy, the suppression of information. He said that this time is especially noteworthy in terms of suppression of information concerning southern Africa, and he compared it to 1956 with regard to southeast Asia.

The article follows.

...To explain the tragedy taking place in Zimbabwe we must look beyond its borders at Southern Africa as a whole, and at the strategic situation of Southern Africa in Africa. The double standard, racism, undoubtedly explains something. But in the past few years the western powers have begun to coordinate their policies in Southern Africa for very practical and concrete reasons. They have vital interests in the area. But Southern Africa is inherently unstable at present. There are armed struggles going on in several parts of the subcontinent which threaten the stability of the white regimes. If these regimes are overthrown, the whole area will be in turmoil, and important western interests will be threatened.

Thus the western powers have changed their policies toward Southern Africa. Until not long ago they were willing to talk about the decolonization of the area. In the United Nations, they showed forbearance in the face of the mounting assault on South Africa and Portugal. They cut many official ties with both countries and kept official contacts to a minimum. The limits of their sympathies for the idea of liberation in Southern Africa have now apparently been reached. For the crisis in Southern Africa is real, and raises real problems and puts an end to rhetoric. The result has been an important shift in policy. The western powers are now working together to ensure POLITICAL STABILITY in the subcontinent. There is evidence of this everywhere. The violation of the arms embargo on South Africa, the U.S. Azores treaty with Portugal, the official encouragement of loans, the licensing of arms not previously allowed to go to South Africa, the efforts to bring the subcontinent under the NATO umbrella, the "settlement" in Zimbabwe. All these are part of a policy for Southern Africa as a whole, and each step contributes to reinforcing the position of white power there.

In order to see this policy as a whole, one must put together many pieces; but it is not a question of speculation. There is logic in this policy and it has a long and hallowed tradition. Furthermore, the changing western policy is now becoming a matter of public record. It has recently been revealed that the Nixon Administration conducted a major review of policy toward Southern Africa in 1969. The outcome of this review was a shift of major importance. The U.S. has decided to abandon the former policy of limited contact with South Africa and Portugal and has embarked upon a policy of expanded contacts and assistance for the white regimes. It is not difficult, in the present context, to see what the U.S. Government is trying to achieve. This decision, furthermore, was not taken in isolation. The new policy may be safely assumed to reflect the views of other western governments with important interests in Africa, and especially of the present Conservative Government in England.

Spheres of Interest

The Great Powers have effected a division of the world in which everybody knows more or less where he may pursue his interests unimpeded, although the borders of the system are not at all clear, and there are constant struggles between the powers over where to draw them. To an important extent this is the result of the fact that changes proceeding autonomously in various parts of the world entail changes in the balance of power. This is especially true of the Third World, whose common interests and situation have come to be defined

only in recent decades, and is in a process of change. Most of the poor countries were until only a relatively short time ago parts of the old colonial system built by the European Powers. They are now supposedly independent and in terms of constitutional politics, of course, some even profess a kind of socialism. But in real terms, when one considers their ability to pursue an independent course of action, they are not. They remain economically tied to the capitalist system. Even if they do not depend upon the old metropolitan power, they depend upon the western powers as a bloc. They trade with them, produce for them, accept their aid and advice, and send their youth to them to be educated. The poor countries have become appendages of the rich, their economic development has been arrested; with their path to progress blocked, they are in constant turmoil. Many of them are on the road to revolution, which will mean breaking many of their ties to the capitalist world.

The rich capitalist countries cannot accept the breaking of these ties lightly, for they, in their turn, are dependent upon the poor countries. The Third World is an important, if not the most important, arena of conflict in the modern world. And the stake of the rich capitalist countries in the Third World has led to a near obsession with the "problem of counter-insurgency." This is now seen by many experts as the central problem. As one of France's most eminent strategists, General Andre Beaufre, puts it: "The major long-term danger...may come from the 'Tiers Monde' and the consequent necessity is to move towards as large as possible a community of peoples whose roots lie in European civilization, now in process of rejuvenation." This is what lies behind the long-run planning of the western powers today. And this is what lies behind policies of the United States toward Indochina. It is against this background that one must see the emerging lines of western policy toward Southern Africa....

All of Africa lies within what has commonly been accepted as the western sphere of interest. This must be stated clearly if one is to avoid the usual cant about the responsibilities of the rich countries toward developing countries. Such rhetoric tells us nothing about the realities of African politics in the world context.... However grave the economic problems they face, African countries still labor to solve them within the framework of their relations with western countries, which is why the problems are not being solved. In this context, real independence is impossible.

It is not only that the western countries use all the means at their disposal to block initiatives, however beneficial to Africa, which might threaten their interests. It is also that, in the name of General Beaufre's grand solution, they are moving energetically toward that community of "peoples whose roots lie in European civilization." The strategic planners evidently feel that this may be the only way to "keep Africa." An alliance of the NATO powers with South Africa, Portugal, and Rhodesia is in the making.

Neo-Colonialism in Southern Africa

Independent Africa is only beginning to discover the reality of neo-colonialism, that freedom does not come when the new flag is raised. The growing influence of foreign economic power in Africa is the inevitable consequence of the continuing expansion of the western economies....

Southern Africa has become exceedingly important to the western powers, both as a market and as a source of raw materials. Adequate figures of its quantitative importance as a market are not available. But the South African "market" alone is very large because the white community has an exceedingly high per capita income. And foreign investors see important potential in the urban African "market". Thus, foreign investment in manufacturing facilities is expanding rapidly. In 1950 the U.S. had only \$44 million in direct manufacturing investment in South Africa. By 1970, the value of these investments had increased tenfold. The value of investment in mining had increased very little. There is a further reason for the growing importance of investment in manufacturing by overseas companies. South Africa has a highly developed industrial system, and the infrastructure to go with it. It is used by the multinational corporations as a base for exporting to many other African countries.

Recent investigations have shown increasing dependence of western countries on supplies of minerals from Southern Africa. The countries of the subcontinent now produce very high proportions of the world supply of more than ten important minerals, many of which are of critical importance to metallurgical, machinery, and electrical industries. The reserves of minerals already in production and of other minerals, including petroleum, are very high and constitute an important part of world reserves in many cases. The U.S., U.K., West Germany, and Japan all import substantial proportions of their total domestic consumption of certain minerals from Southern Africa. The joint dependence of these countries on Southern African minerals is of a very high degree, and is likely to increase.

The drive for markets and for sources of raw materials in Southern Africa has created an economic system which functions as an appendage of the western industrial system. The economy of the region is highly unbalanced. It produces primary commodities for export, manufactured goods for the wealthy few, or, again, for export. All these goods are produced at exceedingly low cost under a system of forced labor, or very nearly that. The peculiarity of Southern Africa is that it contains an enclave of several million wealthy whites who function as well-paid overseers in a kind of world plantation system. The poor, the laborers, the vast mass of the population, have little or no prospect of escaping the harshest kind of poverty. The economy has little capacity for self-sustained growth and development. This situation is the outcome of the dynamics of "commerce", of the way in which relations between the rich and the poor have developed.

This outward expansion of the capitalist industrial economies cannot easily be halted. It is part of the intrinsic dynamic of such systems. They must grow in order to function. The consequences of their expansion are to block progress, at least for the poor. Southern Africa is completely enmeshed in this web of economic relationships and is likely to become more and more important to the neo-colonial system....Thus economic stagnation will continue and the plight of the peoples of the area will become more serious.

Neo-Colonialism and Political Stability

To understand the present crisis in Southern Africa, however, one must look beyond the purely economic facts. The economic facts have inevitable political consequences. The "world economy" consists of a core of highly developed and wealthy countries and of a periphery of poor countries. The economies at the core, being

capitalist, must grow to maintain anything like stability in employment. In the course of their growth in this century, the wealthy economies have wreaked havoc in the periphery and shaped the survivors of that destruction to their own needs. There is no doubt that there is still plenty of "economic space" in the world into which the wealthy economies can expand. New markets can be developed. Old ones can be more competently exploited. Present sources of raw materials can expand production. New sources can probably be developed.

The expansion of the neo-colonial system, however, can continue only in a climate of political stability. For "business as usual" does not take place in situations fraught with uncertainty. When the economic activity organized by national corporations takes place all over the world, the whole world has to be policed.

...In 1969 the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Georgetown University held a conference of "Research Resources of the 70's" in Washington. At that conference it was argued that Southern Africa was an area of considerable economic, military, political, and strategic value to the United States. Ernest Lefever of the Brookings Institution argued that: "U.S. policy toward any areas of Africa seeks to augment the forces of stability and peaceful change.... Washington's diplomatic and aid policies are designed to strengthen the new states and encourage the development of moderate governments strong enough to respond to the needs of their peoples and capable of sustaining mutually beneficial relations with one another and with the industrial states of the west." (Our emphasis.)

The central strategic issue of the 1970's, according to Mr. Lefever, is the outlook for political stability.... Thus all thoughts are focused on political stability, and by implication on the means of securing it, although the white regimes are fundamentally intolerable to the mass of the population. This kind of research clearly indicates a commitment to underwrite those regimes because the status quo creates a friendly environment.

The Confrontation in Southern Africa

The crisis in Southern Africa is becoming more serious with each passing month. Africa is moving steadily toward a confrontation over apartheid. And the whole world is involved in this confrontation. Southern Africa is of crucial importance to the western powers, to western industry. Those powers wish to preserve political stability there. Any challenge to apartheid, to the whole system of white rule in the subcontinent, is a threat to the neo-colonial system...to the orderly economic processes of everyday life.... In short, the confrontation in Southern Africa is a threat to the world system as we know it today.

No one can predict what will happen in the next month or year. But the trends in Southern Africa are clear. If left to themselves,



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the white regimes will collapse in the long run. One can no longer take their stability for granted.... The position of the white regimes is relatively strong at this moment. But they simply cannot resist history.

There is little doubt now that the future will bring violent upheaval in Southern Africa. The forces that oppose apartheid have grown in strength and will continue to grow more powerful. Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa will defend white supremacy to the last. It is absurd to expect that they will dissolve by fiat or abandon by a long series of negotiated settlements the very system for which they stand. The world is dealing with a totalitarian system, exploiting whole peoples, and increasingly arming itself for "defense." It is clear that we are not heading toward "peaceful change."

It has been clear for many years that Southern Africa would eventually be the scene of a major world crisis. The first reaction among the western nations was significant. After Sharpeville, it was clear that change was in the wind. Countries with close ties to South Africa at the time tried to reinforce the status quo while being fairly discrete about it. Immediately after Sharpeville, foreign interests in South Africa helped to prevent financial chaos by providing substantial loans, and by various other means. But on the whole the attitude was one of caution and "watchful waiting."

The refusal to see the reality of the approaching crisis was convenient. For it made it possible to condemn apartheid and Portuguese colonialism and to leave it at that. There was no conflict between economic and strategic interests on the one hand and the maintenance of an honorable and antiracist foreign policy on the other. But that was because there was no danger.... Now, however, the period of effortless virtue in foreign policy has ended.

The western powers have had to confront the realities of the situation in Southern Africa. The logic of neo-colonialism has forced them to think not in terms of rights and wrongs but in terms of power.... People who make decisions have been thinking in these terms for many years....

This kind of reasoning started the machinery of government turning long ago. The result has been a new, covert policy designed to "secure" Southern Africa in the interests of stability there and throughout the continent.

Everything which the western powers are doing in Southern Africa now is designed to serve that end, or to hide the fact that this is the end pursued.... I do not say this in any sense that might be suggested by the word "conspiracy." The western powers have simply set in motion the machinery which they use to counter threats to their interests. The principle on which policy is based is simple. It was stated some time ago at a meeting of the Council on Foreign Relations in New York:

"The lesson of the Cuban experience--or one of them--is never let an insurgency movement, no matter how insignificant it may be, survive, for it may gather force and grow.... The lesson of the Chilean elections--or one of them--is that Latin American societies, no matter how politically sophisticated they may appear to be, no matter how lengthy their experience with the forms and formulas of democratic practice, are not really to be trusted at free political play...."

From this principal many things follow.